



“Why is Yoga Unpopular among Indian Youth?”



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Abstract

The main objectives of this survey is to find out the reasons why yoga is not popular among the Indian youths, to give suggestions, to assess the importance of yoga for maintaining good physical health in present day's busy life. Survey method was employed to collect the data, whereas participants were selected based on their interest to participate in the survey. The survey questionnaire was prepared related to the youth's perspective, thinking and priorities regarding yoga using Google forms, and it was circulated in social media, and the responses were collected. After the data collection, the data were analyzed using descriptive analysis; consequently, inferences and suggestions were made. Participants suggested having a proper trainer, a partner, conducting classes in colleges and spreading awareness to increase the interest of yoga. Not many people practice yoga daily. Most of the participants have difficulty in getting time from their busy routine to do yoga, and some of them found it boring. Hopefully, by following the suggestions, there could be an increment in the numbers.

1. Introduction

Yoga is an ancient Indian traditional practice which has become increasingly popular all over the world (Kunalayananda, 1993). According to Swami Kunalayananda (1883-1966), yoga has multiple physical, mental and spiritual benefits and the influence on the body is far more powerful than the influence of the body on the mind (Verma, 2014). Despite the popularity of yoga in India, little is

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known about the beliefs of yoga practitioners towards yoga. While yoga was intended for spiritual growth originally, nowadays yoga practice has different applications and so it is worth understanding the reasons why people choose to practice yoga. Unfortunately, it is found that the present generation of India is somehow not aware of yoga, whereas in most of the foreign countries yoga is practiced by the school children and college students, collectively the youth on a daily basis. This is because they are well aware of the health benefits of practicing yoga, which is lacking in the youth of our country. This research is based on the responses given by the students between the age group of 18-22 of few universities across India, to the questions asked related to their perspective, thinking and priorities regarding yoga.

2. Related works

In a study conducted in Essen, Germany, a paper-based self-rated questionnaire survey was conducted over a period of 3 years in 2486 participants (Cramer H, 2013). This study was conducted to assess whether yoga was used for primary medical complaints by patients attending an internal medicine clinic; and if it was, the perceived benefits yoga, as well as the perceived harm of yoga practice. It was found that 12.1 percent of patients practiced yoga for primary medical complaints and found it beneficial. It was also found that choosing to practice yoga for primary medical complaints and found it beneficial. It was also found that choosing to practice yoga was associated with socio-demographic factors, mental health, and the health locus control, which is the belief that health depends on the person's behavior (N, 2004. p. 217-20.). It was also found that yoga practice was not associated with the patients' specific benefits.

Another survey was conducted in New York City by developing and validating a questionnaire, 'Beliefs About Yoga Scale (BAYS)' (Sohl SJ, 2011). Convenience sampling of 426 participants was done from outside a cafeteria at a medical center in New York City. This scale assessed the beliefs about yoga which could influence the yoga practice of yoga followers. Beliefs such as health benefits, expected discomfort, and expected social -norms emerged in the factor analysis.

An anonymous online survey was conducted in fifteen Iyengar yoga studios in U.S. most of whom had chronic health conditions (Ross A, 2013). Only 1045 surveys were completed and used for statistical analysis. The survey was conducted to assess yoga practice and the health characteristic of yoga practitioners, and to study their beliefs regarding effects of yoga practitioners, and to study their beliefs regarding effects of yoga practice on their health. A cross-sectional design was used for the survey. Freidberg Mindfulness Inventory, Mental Health Continuum (subjective well-being). Multi-factor Screener (diet), PROMIS sleep disturbance, fatigue, and social support, and the International Physical Activity Questionnaire were used for the survey. It was found that yoga improved happiness (86.5 percent), energy (84.5 percent), sleep (68.5 percent), social relationships (67 percent), and weight (57.3 percent), while beliefs did not differ substantially according to race or gender (Subodh, 2015).

3. Research Objectives

The main objective is to find out the reasons why yoga is not popular among Indian youths, know the suggestions given by the participants and assess the Importance of Yoga for maintaining good physical health in the present day's busy life.

4. Research Methodology

The survey was carried out by circulating a series of questions related to yoga in Google form in various social media platforms. Data collection started in May 2020 and ended in June 2020. The sample includes one hundred students (males 85%, females 15%) participating from various corners of the country (India). Some of them have also responded verbally. Designed graphs based on the responds, discussed on each topic, set up a priority table, finally took suggestions from the respondents and concluded.

Procedure

1. Literature survey was conducted using some research papers of different authors related to the topic and went through their studies and survey about yoga and its importance in India and throughout the world.

2. Framed a questionnaire with 18 questions based on yoga, through which we wanted to know how much our youth is aware of yoga, practice it in daily life and their individual perceptions regarding yoga.

3. 100 students participated in this survey between the age group of 18-22 from institutions like VIT Chennai, KIIT Bhubaneswar, NRS Medical College, and different peer groups.

4. Questionnaire was framed in Google forms (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScWVbd3r481mFlw2VfZsoJ1gHQ-UDVDHJZcHuKfjMcctnYuQ/viewform?usp=sf_link) and circulated in WhatsApp groups and also personally mailed to participants. In addition, a semi structured interview was also conducted to get responses. On the whole 100 responses were received.

5. Started the survey on May 2020 and ended in June 2020.

6. Survey process included circulating forms, telephonic conversation, social media polls and face to face questioning.

7. After arranging the data, analytical process started in the mid of June. Formed graphs and calculated the responds into percentage format and discussed on responses given to each question.

8. Then we asked a question to give preferences to various physical activities (sports, gym, yoga and dance) based on personal choice. After getting the data, the graph was made to show the preferences of the different physical activities. To get a general preference order, we gave some preference points to each one. The distribution of points based on preferences are as follows:

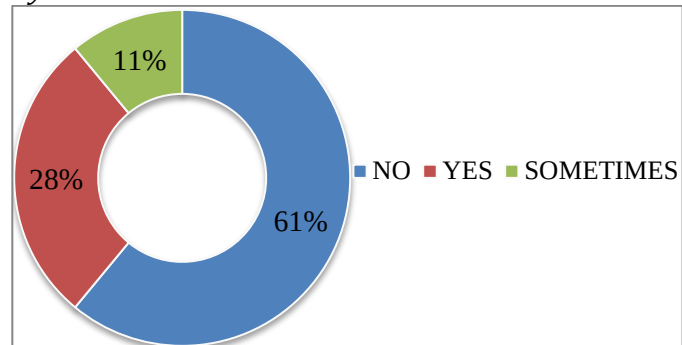
- 1st preference = 1 point
- 2nd preference = 0.8 point
- 3rd preference = 0.6 point
- 4th preference = 0.4 point

Applied a formula $\text{Score} = ((1\text{st preference responses} * 1) + (2\text{nd preference responses} * 0.8) + (3\text{rd preference responses} * 0.6) + (4\text{th preference responses} * 0.4))$ and obtained the final preference score of each physical activity.

9. Analyzed the suggestions provided by the same group to make yoga interesting and important.

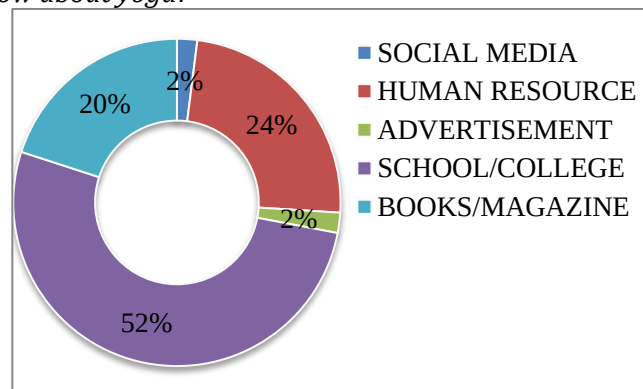
5. Results and Discussion

Do you practice yoga daily?



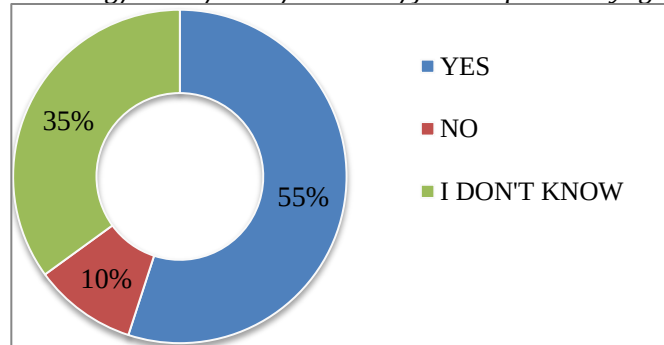
It is very shocking to note that the percentage of people practice yoga daily is quite less (28%) and practice occasionally is 11%. Rest 61% do not practice daily.

Where did you get to know about yoga?



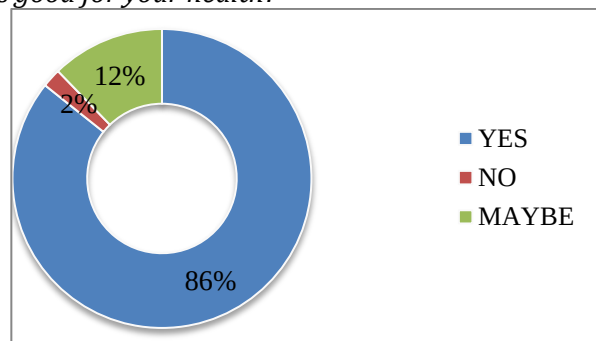
As per the given data in figure most of them (52%) got to know about yoga through schools/colleges as most of the educational institutes are encouraging yoga classes or seminars in their campus. 24% got to know from parents, relatives, friends, surroundings, etc. 20% got awareness from books, magazines, journals, etc. 2% from social media as the youth is very much involved in it and it has become an important source of news updates. The remaining 2% got to know from the advertisements. Now, the question comes how well they are aware? That we would discuss further.

Does anyone in your surrounding/house/work/relatives/friends practice yoga?



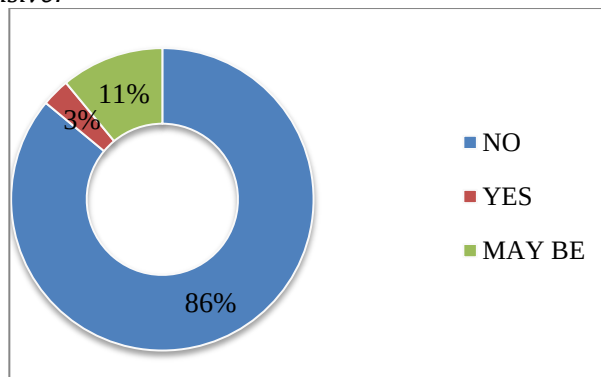
People who were asked this question have a considerably good and healthy surrounding as 55% of them responded that they know people around them who practice yoga. Though 35% responded that they are not known about anyone who practices yoga around them, yet we can assume that some of them may practice.

Do you believe that yoga is good for your health?



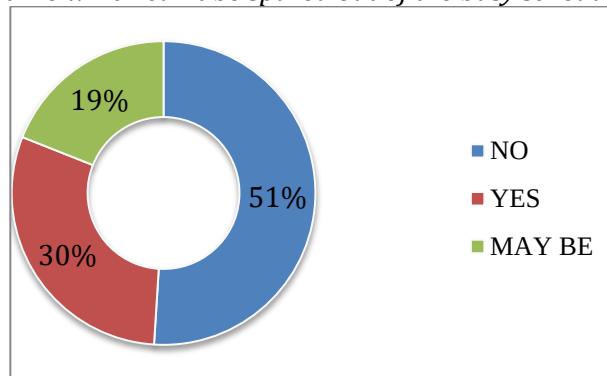
An interesting fact is, most of them (86%) believe that yoga is good for health and the same percentage believes that it is not expensive as well.

Do you think yoga is expensive?



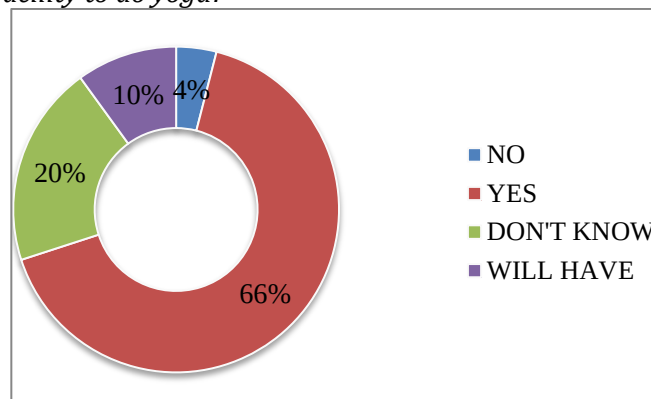
Very less percentage (3%) of participants believed that yoga is expensive, mostly 86% of the total participants believed that yoga is not expensive. Therefore, it does not make any hindrance to practice yoga regularly.

Does yoga require a lot of time which can't be spared out of the busy schedule?



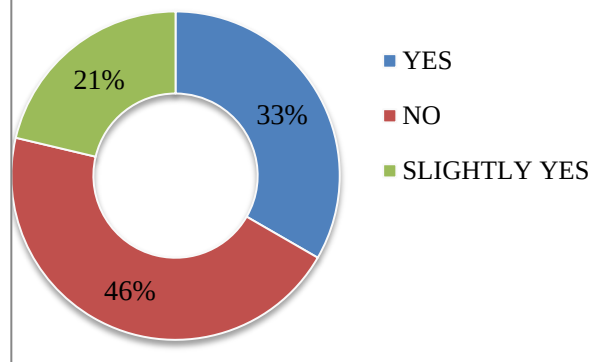
30% of them said that yoga requires a considerable amount of time in a day which can't be spared out of daily routine and 19% had a slight inclination towards the same thought. But 51% believed that yoga can be done despite having a busy schedule.

Does your college have facility to do yoga?



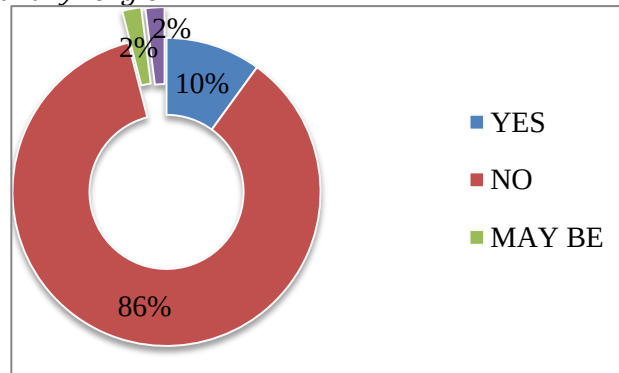
This data gives an idea about the encouragement given to yoga by the colleges in our country. Mostly (66%) have yoga facilities in their colleges. 10% have said that they would have the yoga facility in their college as their college was newly built. Only 4% said that they have no yoga facility in their college.

Do you find yoga to be boring?



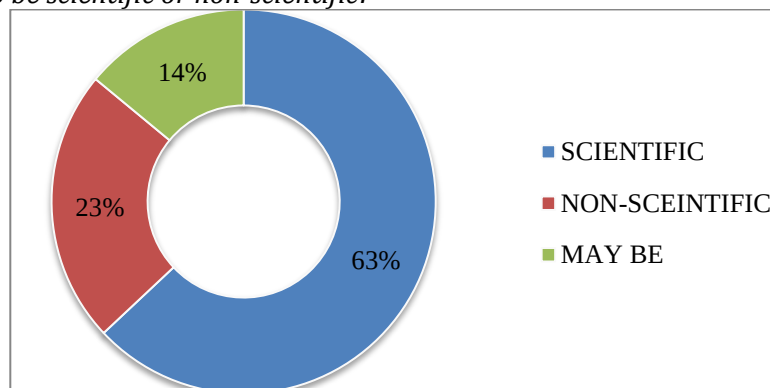
This question was based on the experience of every individual and their thinking. 33% said that they find yoga to be boring and 21% also have a similar perspective on yoga, whereas 46% of the people don't find it to be boring.

Do you associate yoga with any religion?



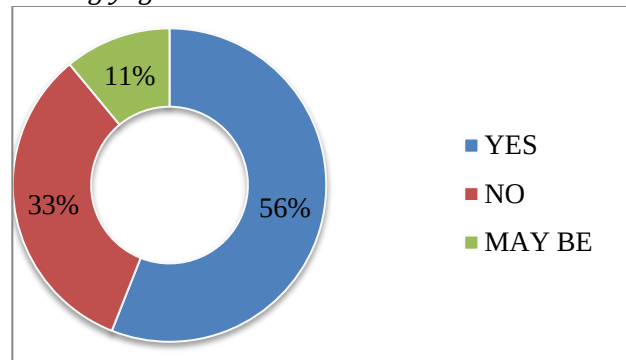
A lot of times, it has been found that people associate yoga with a particular religion. Based on the data we have got, mostly (86%) did not associate it with any religion, rather they commented that it can be practiced by anybody irrespective of caste, religion, region, gender and creed. Whereas 10% believed it to be originated from the Vedas which are typically the religious books of the Hindus so they associated it with a particular religion.

Do you find yoga to be scientific or non-scientific?



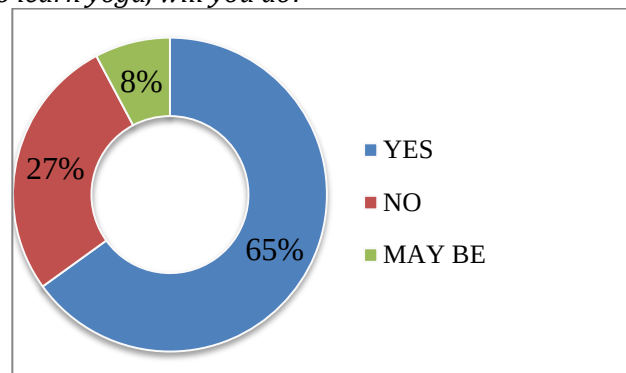
This question was asked mostly to the students who have an engineering background or medical science background. 63% of them believe yoga to be scientific and 14% have a similar thought. Whereas 23% disagreed with it, which still gives a conclusion that students don't find it to be illogical. People do have rational thoughts about yoga as 86% do not associate it with any religion.

Do you have any interest in doing yoga?



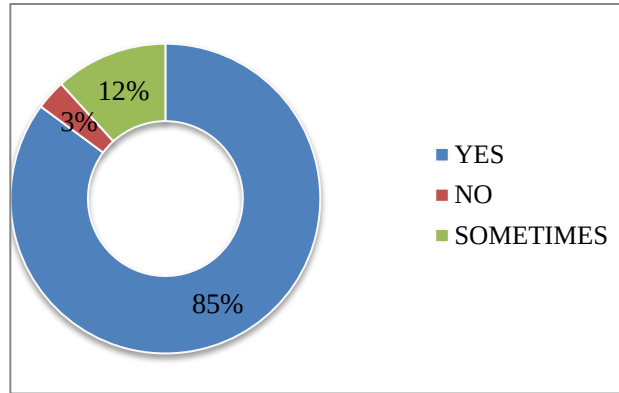
A direct question was asked about the participants' interest in yoga, so around 56% have said they have an interest which is a good amount. Also, 33% had no interest in doing yoga and 11% were not confident about that.

If you are given chance to learn yoga, will you do?



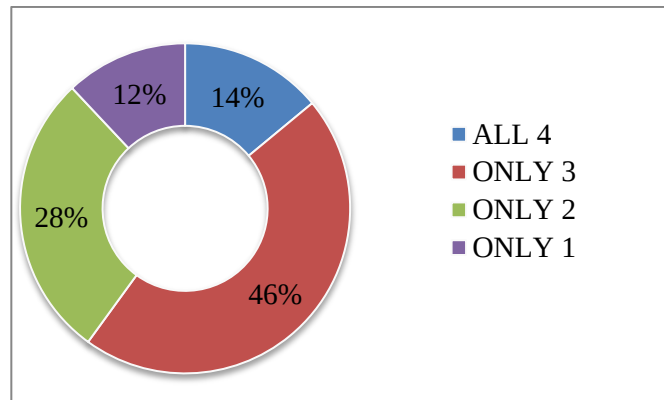
They were further asked a question "If you are given chance to learn yoga, will you do?" the percentage got increased to 65%. This means there is a lack of chance due to which some of them have no interest.

Are you health cautious?



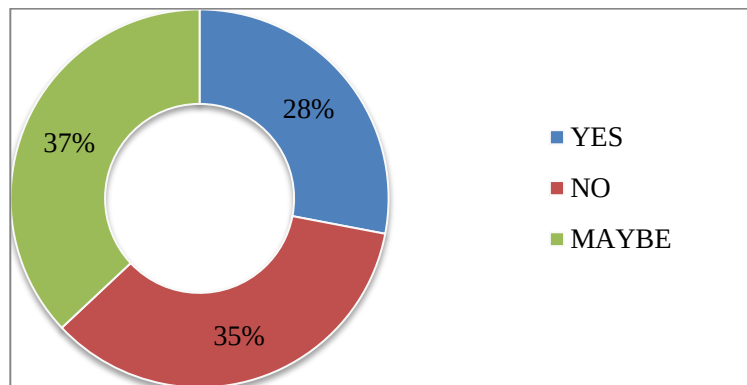
85% were health cautious and 3% were not, 12% were slightly cautious. People might not give importance to yoga but they give importance to their health, so it is not a reason for them not doing yoga.

What do you do in order to make your health fit? (Eat healthy /physical activities/ relaxation/ no addiction)



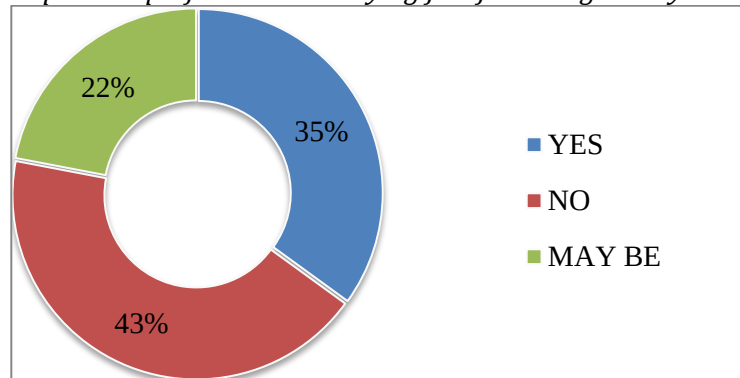
It was found that almost everybody was health cautious and they do either physical activities or eat healthily or relax or they stay away from addiction to keep them fit. So we found that very few people (14%) maintain all four of these, also only (12%) follow any one of these. The maximum numbers follow either three of these (46%) or any two of these (28%).

Does the youth not find it to be "cool"?



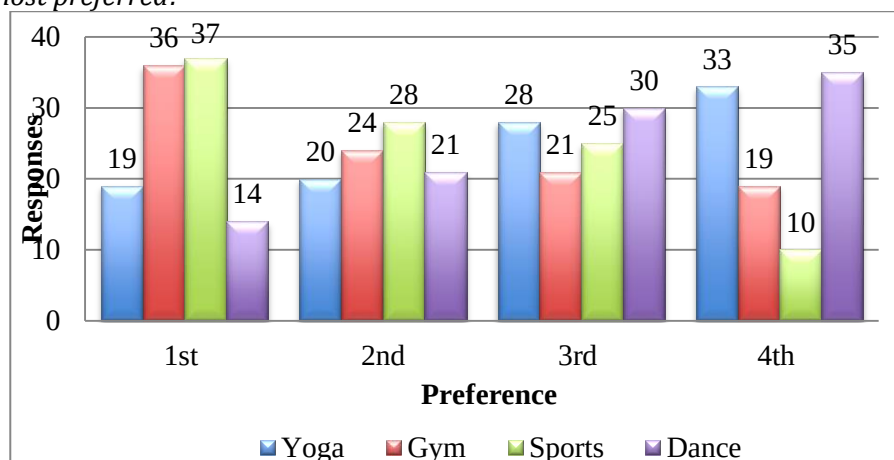
Most importantly 28% of the youth said they don't find it to be cool or showy 35% also believed slightly the same but 37% opposed it.

Is building triceps /biceps more preferred than staying just fit amongst the youth?



Nowadays it has become a trend of building up muscles and make the body flaunt among the youth, so a similar question was asked to them and 35% said that they believe in building up muscle rather than just staying fit 22% also found it same, but 43% people condemned it.

Which is the most preferred?



- Weightage

1. 1st preference = 1 point
2. 2nd preference = 0.8 point
3. 3rd preference = 0.6 point
4. 4th preference = 0.4 point

- Score Calculations

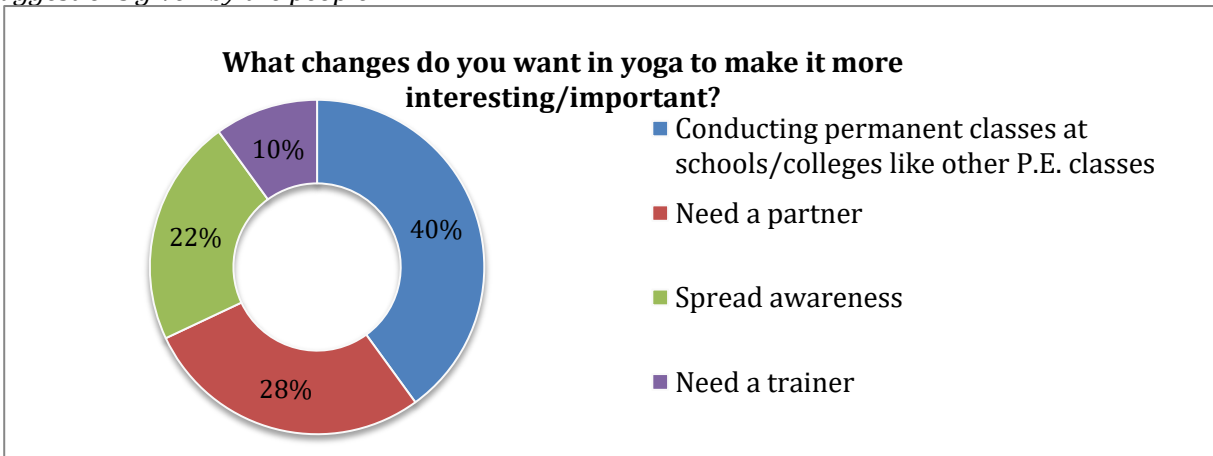
Score = ((1st preference responses * 1) + (2nd preference responses * 0.8) + (3rd preference responses * 0.6) + (4th preference responses * 0.4))

Physical activities Preferences	Yoga	Gym	Sports	Dance
1 st	19	36	37	14
2 nd	20	24	28	21
3 rd	28	21	25	30
4 th	33	19	10	35
SCORE	65	75.4	78.4	62.8

With the help of the data, we got a result that sports are the most preferred with a score of 78.4, followed by the gym (75.4), yoga (65) and dance was the least preferred (62.8). This result clearly shows the interest of the people for other physical activities over yoga.

- Sports are the most preferred.
- Yoga is the third most preferred.

Suggestions given by the people



We asked about the suggestions from the same 100 people and we have formed the options based on the maximum number of suggestions we got. 40% said to have scheduled classes in schools/colleges. 28% said they need a partner with whom they can do yoga and keep encouraging them, 22% suggested to spread awareness and 10% suggested for good trainer/guide.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the survey gave us a lot of information about people's perspectives and thinking about yoga. It was shocking when 61% responded that they do not practice yoga daily. Also, it was found that almost all of them knew about yoga. Most of the participants had positive thinking about yoga and very few had a doubt about it which comprises a system of spiritual, moral, and physical practices. (S, 2009). Familiarity with yoga can be concluded by analyzing the surrounding in which they live. Most of them have yoga facilities in their colleges and even they have relations with those who practice yoga daily. We were curious to know about the reasons that keep them stay away from yoga.

The main reason that we can conclude that most of them are entangled with the busy schedule and have difficulty to spare the required time for yoga in a day, but thrice or five times a week is healthy as suggested by Kate Saal, "Healthy practice for vinyasa yoga is usually around 3-5 times a week." (Kate, 2011). Out of the findings, we can conclude that people have more inclination towards other physical activities than yoga. This might be everyone's personal choice with some valid reasons or maybe they have responded based on their affection towards the individual activity, but it is quite clear that people have little knowledge about yoga. There is a huge role of celebrities promoting each of these activities that influence the public a lot and thus they try to do the same as those celebrities. Most of the celebrities can be seen going to the gym or dancing on their songs and sharing the videos on the social platform. Maybe seeing their favorite sportsman playing a sport excites them to engage in the same. So to some extent, we can say that yoga is somehow less promoted by these celebrities than the other physical activities. Nevertheless, Indian government is trying to conduct various events like International Yoga Day to spread the importance of yoga both to keep our citizens healthy and our culture alive. In one of the speeches Honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi said, "Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action, restraint, and fulfilment, harmony between man and nature, a holistic approach to health and well-being." (John, 2019).

Finally, through our last question, we got to know about the betterment that can be made to make them do yoga. The responses have projected a few more problems like, not having a yoga partner, not having regular classes, not having good trainers, and lesser-known facts about yoga that resist them to practice yoga. So hopefully whatever they suggested can be brought forward and implement to make yoga an integral part of our life, and make it healthier and beautiful than ever.

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